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BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc
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March 22, 2004

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VIA HAND DELIVERY

Hon Deborah Taylor Tate, Chairman
Tennessee Regulatory Authority
460 James Robertson Parkway
Nashville, TN 37238

Re: *Petition for Arbitration of ITC^DeltaCom Communications, Inc. with
BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. Pursuant to the
Telecommunications Act of 1996*
Docket No. 03-00119

Dear Chairman Tate:

BellSouth Telecommunications, Inc. ("BellSouth") files this letter requesting a brief delay in consideration of DeltaCom arbitration Issue No 26, related to the market rate for switching

As you know, Chairman Powell has admonished telecommunications carriers to commence negotiations of commercial agreements. Consistent with this direction, BellSouth hopes to engage the CLECs in meaningful negotiation of issues addressed in the recent DC Circuit opinion, including switching in the context of UNE-P. Toward that end, BellSouth will shortly be making an announcement inviting CLECs to begin serious negotiations to enter into commercial agreements for market-based switching from BellSouth. While we believe this announcement will be released very soon, perhaps even within the next two days, we are not able to describe today the offer's details. We wanted to make the Authority aware that this step was imminent, in light of the Authority's intention of ruling on the DeltaCom issue today. BellSouth believes that the announcement may provide the Authority with context for making a decision in the DeltaCom case and we would respectfully request, in light of the imminence of the announcement, that the Authority consider deferring a decision on Issue No. 26 until the next Agenda Conference.

As urged by Chairman Powell, BellSouth hopes to successfully negotiate commercial switching agreements that would obviate the need for further involvement

Hon. Deborah Taylor Tate, Chairman

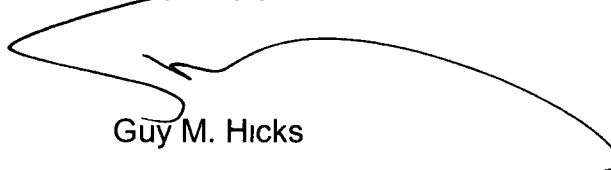
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by the TRA. At this point, BellSouth simply requests a brief deferral of this issue in order to provide BellSouth with an opportunity to take this important step in what we hope will be successful negotiations with CLECs

Copies of the enclosed are being provided to counsel for DeltaCom.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Guy M. Hicks". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping loop on the left side and a smaller loop on the right side.

Guy M. Hicks

GMH:ch

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on March 22, 2004, a copy of the foregoing document was served on the parties of record, via the method indicated.

- ☐ Hand
- ☐ Mail
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- ☒ Electronic

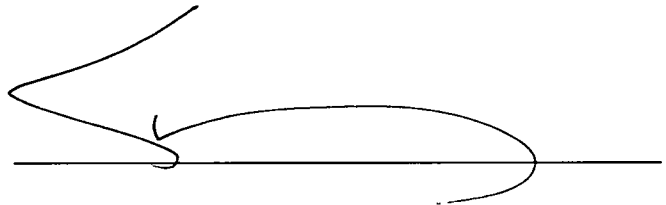
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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Adelman', is written over a horizontal line.